

# CHAPTER 3

## Suitability

### *Introduction*

National Park Service *Management Policies 2001* require that sites under consideration for inclusion in the National Park System be evaluated for their suitability:

- An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state or local governments; or the private sector.
- Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential and similar resources already protected by the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance or duplicate resource-protection or visitor-use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.<sup>32</sup>

NPS evaluates and assesses themes based on its 1996 Thematic Framework. This framework invites thoughtful consideration of larger trends and broader contexts that replaced earlier thematic emphasis of chronology of events and thematic topics. Adequacy of representation is determined by comparing the proposed addition to other units in the National Park System. In that comparison, the NPS considers differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity or combination of resources and opportunities for public use.

This section describes how the resources meet the thematic framework and determines the suitability of including the resources in the National Park System by examining existing National Historic Site and park units and other historic sites around the

country in public ownership to determine the extent to which the story and themes of resources considered by this SRS are told elsewhere.

### *Thematic Framework*

Although the former Homestead Works has been largely demolished, important resources remain in its vicinity that illustrate three broad themes in American history: *the role of engineering and technology in developing the American economy*, *labor's role in developing the American economy*, and *peopling places and community*. As noted in Historical Significance and Themes (pg. 10), these themes are incorporated in Theme I: Peopling Places and Theme V: Developing the American Economy, as well as sub-topics to these themes, identified as part of the *History in the National Park Service: Themes & Concepts* (2000).<sup>33</sup> The relationship and importance of the resources that represent each of these broad themes is summarized below:

- **Carrie Blast Furnaces 6 and 7 and the Hot Metal Bridge** portray *the role of engineering and technology in developing the American economy*. They represent technological innovations and improvements made at the Homestead Works by Carnegie Steel and U.S. Steel engineers to increase production during the 1907 to 1951 period. At Carrie, the practice of “hard-driving” with the utilization of Mesabi ores was developed. These innovations, together with comparable technological advances in steel making and shaping, made Homestead the most productive steel mill in the Pittsburgh area during the twentieth century and made Pittsburgh itself the steel capital of America.
- **The Bost Building, Battle of Homestead Landing Site, Steel Workers Organizing Committee Monument, as well as Carrie 6 and 7**, represent *labor's role in developing the American economy*. The first three resources are important sites in the history of the American labor movement. The Bost Building and Battle of Homestead landing site were the primary settings for the historic Battle of Homestead in 1892, which inaugurated the non-union period that lasted until 1937. The SWOC monument commemorates union workers slain in the 1892

battle and the triumph of industrial unionism in 1936 and 1937. The Carrie Furnace site represents labor's plight of arduous work, long hours and unhealthy conditions during the non-union period, when workers were subjected to the same inhumane hard-driving as the machinery.

- **The Homestead Historic District, particularly the Homestead Carnegie Library and a complex of churches and housing in the City Farm Plan Neighborhood**, represents the theme of *peopling places and community*, including the development of social institutions and expression of cultural values during the 1892 to 1951 period. The association of buildings with steel workers, as well as the layout of the communities and the architecture of buildings, convey a key part of the Homestead story.

### *Comparison With Other National Park Service Units and Historic Sites Managed by Others*

Out of the 380 units of the National Park System, only 9 are highlighted by NPS to represent industrial themes. Two NPS sites represent early iron-making and no sites represent the steel industry. No sites deal with the combination of themes described in Chapter 2 from the end of the nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century: *the role of engineering and technology in developing the American economy*; *labor's role in developing the American economy*; and *peopling places and community*.

The following is a descriptive overview of the historic sites that represent these thematic topics. The historic sites that were examined included National Park System units that deal with themes of industry as well as several other sites not in the system that deal specifically with iron and steel industries. These sites are grouped into categories corresponding to their current management, with sites in each category listed chronologically.

#### **National Park System units**

- **Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, MA.** This is the site of the first integrated iron-works in North America, 1646-1668. It includes the reconstructed blast furnace, forge, rolling mill and a restored seventeenth century house. Saugus illustrates the critical role of iron making to seventeenth-century settlement and its legacy in shaping the early history of the nation. This site does not deal with the steel industry, predates the labor movement and has no relation-

ship to an adjacent community of the period.

- **Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, PA.** The buildings include a blast furnace, the ironmaster's mansion, village and auxiliary structures. Hopewell Furnace was founded in 1771 by ironmaster Mark Bird. The furnace operated until 1883. Hopewell Furnace NHS is committed to preserving and interpreting the site to represent an iron-making community and a significant way of life and work in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This site is rural in character, does not deal with the steel industry and deals with labor themes of an earlier period.
- **Lowell National Historical Park, MA.** The site is a partnership park that commemorates America's Industrial Revolution as well as themes of immigration and urbanization. The Lowell Park includes the Boott Cotton Mill Museum, with an operating weave room of 88 power looms, "mill girl" boardinghouses, the Suffolk Mill Turbine Exhibit and guided tours that tell the story of the transition from farm to factory, chronicle immigrant and labor history and trace industrial technology, including Lowell's extensive power canal system. This site emphasizes nineteenth century industrialization and has strong resources that interpret the relationship of industry to workers and their community. The site deals with the textile industry, whose form and technologically are significantly earlier and different in scale from the steel technology represented at Homestead. Although the site deals with workers and labor, it does not focus on labor movements and protests.
- **Tredegar Iron Works, VA.** A private firm, Tredegar was the South's largest major antebellum rolling mill capable of producing cannon and railroad rails, and it operated from 1843 to 1957. After closing, most of the aboveground structures were razed. The Ethyl Corporation bought the site, restored the Confederate Gun Foundry and stabilized the rest of the site, and today allows the NPS and the Riverfront Development Corporation to use key portions of the site for public benefit and interpretation. The site includes a new visitor center and exhibits interpreting the Richmond National Battlefield Park and the Iron Works. The visitor center for the Richmond National Battlefield Park is located in the Pattern Storage Building. The evolution of the Tredegar site is illustrated from its beginnings as one of Richmond's many flour mills to its unique identity as the Confederacy's major supplier of artillery. The significant period and technology of this site predate the

era of steel, and the site has no strong relationship to an adjacent community.

- **Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, CA.** This site, located on the Sacramento River on a naval ammunition base, was the site of a tragic explosion on July 17, 1944, that killed 320 men, of whom 202 were black enlisted men. This site is an affiliated area and is the only NPS site that centrally deals with the theme of Labor Organizations and Protests, as it was the site of a spontaneous work stoppage, which amounted to a mutiny, on August 9 of the same year, as well as a two-day hunger strike organized by 1,000 African-American construction battalion workers to protest racist conditions and hiring practices. The tragedy was a factor in the U.S. military steps to end racial inequality after WW II. Although this site deals with labor themes, its story of racial inequality is not central to Homestead's resources and the site does not deal with the steel industry. Special permission from the U.S. Navy is required for entry to this site, and it is of limited interpretive value to the general public.

#### Historic Sites Managed by State or Local Entities

- **Cornwall Iron Furnace, PA.** This historic site is administered and managed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. It includes the stone furnace, steam-powered air-blast machinery and several related buildings that survived intact through the years. The stone furnaces are a dramatic landscape feature at this completely preserved mid-nineteenth century iron-making complex, which was in blast from 1742 to 1883. This site does not deal with the steel industry, predates the labor movement and does not have a strong relationship to an adjacent community of the period.
- **The Scranton Iron Furnaces, PA.** The Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company Furnaces represent the remnants of an industry with statewide significance. The Iron Furnaces operated from 1841 to 1903. In 1903 the operations ceased, as its owners relocated the company to upstate New York for better access to raw materials and shipping. The site was sold to the Wyoming Valley Railroad, which contracted with a Philadelphia company that scrapped all of the equipment and tore down all the structures except the stone blast furnaces. In the late 1960s, the furnaces were acquired by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Currently the site is managed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and is part of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum. This site deals with relatively early iron blast furnace technology that substantially predates the steel industry and its larger scale and more technologically sophisticated methods. The site has no relationship to an adjacent community or to important labor movements.
- **The Lehigh Plant of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, PA.** In 1863, the first iron was produced in Bethlehem for the rolling of railroad rails. In 1904, Bethlehem Steel was incorporated, and in 1941, operations at Bethlehem Steel shifted to all-out war production of steel plate for ships and tanks, structural steel for defense plants and forgings for guns, shells and aircraft engines. After the war, production shifted to coated steel sheets. The steel plant closed in 1995. The world headquarters of Bethlehem Steel Corporation remains here. The site is being redeveloped as a mixed-use complex, and in 1997, the Bethlehem Steel Corporation signed a memorandum of understanding with the Smithsonian Institution for the long-term loan of artifacts from the 1800s to be exhibited in a new museum, the National Museum of Industrial History, which will be affiliated with the Smithsonian. The museum will be located in the plant's No. 2 machine shop. The site is a key component in the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. This site deals strongly with steel technology and industry and has strong relationships to its adjacent community. However, this site is not strongly associated with significant events of the labor movement.
- **Sloss Blast Furnaces, AL.** This NHL is publicly owned and operated by the City of Birmingham. The Sloss Blast Furnaces operated from 1882 to 1971 and is now open to the public as a museum of industry. It illustrates the beginning of industrialization in Alabama and the importance of the site to the development of its community and Birmingham. It also illustrates the central role African-American workers played in the industrial economy of the South at the turn of the century. This site does include significant blast furnace remains, although its focus was industrial pig iron, not steel. The site also deals with important labor stories, particularly the segregation of tasks of African-American workers and their struggle for fair treatment, although the plant was never unionized and this resource does not deal with the key events in the labor movement.
- **The Cambria Iron Works, PA.** This complex is a NHL that is considered one of the most intact

nineteenth century steel-making complexes in the country. Once owned by the Cambria Iron Company, it was known as the country's top steel rail producer during the late 1870s. Today, the site is owned by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, and while many of its mill buildings have been demolished, there are still numerous structures left intact and unused at the present time. This site has strong relationships to the early steel industry (predating Carnegie and his "hard-driving" concepts) and is closely associated with ethnic neighborhoods that have close associations to the plant. The site is not strongly associated with national labor events.

- **The Ford Rouge Plant, MI.** This site is a NHL, initially developed by Henry Ford in 1917 and by 1930 was the largest industrial complex in the world. The plant was a vertically integrated complex that delivered raw materials that were required for automobile production, combined several levels of manufacturing processes, including a steel mill, and assembled these products into cars. At peak, the plant employed 100,000 workers and produced a new car every 49 seconds. The plant was also the site of major events in labor history including "the Battle of the Overpass" in 1937 involving Walter Reuther, who went on to achieve UAW recognition by 1941. The site is still used for active production by the Ford Motor Company, which is in the process of major reinvestment to modernize facilities with an environmentally responsible "green" philosophy. This site includes important elements of all three themes present at Homestead, including industry & technology, labor, and community, as it adjoins southwest Detroit whose form and ethnic structure was strongly influenced by the job opportunities of the Rouge. A planned modernization by Ford Motor Company may substantially alter the historic resources at the Rouge and its continued use as a manufacturing plant may create significant potential conflicts with visitor activities. Although the site includes a still-functioning steel mill, its primary association remains with the automobile industry.

## *Determination of Suitability and Conclusion*

Based on the preceding analysis, the following findings have emerged:

- The labor protest and organization story has very limited representation in the National Park

System. The sole NPS site devoted to this theme is the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, which is on U.S. Navy property and not open to the public. The NHL Bost Building specifically illustrates this labor theme. Nearby resources, including Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7, as well as other sites along the Lower Monongahela River in nearby Braddock, Duquesne and Pittsburgh, place labor in the context of the "big steel" era and its community, as represented by the Homestead Historic District. The combination of these resources offers unique interpretive potential.

- No existing National Park System sites nor sites managed by other entities focus on the "big steel" industrial period and technology represented by Homestead. The consolidation and scale that occurred within the steel industry in the very late nineteenth and early twentieth century resulted in construction of massive steel plants in close proximity to associated worker communities. The relevant NPS industrial sites either interpret other industries (e.g., textiles at Lowell) or earlier charcoal iron technologies and earlier contexts where community associations are weak (e.g., Saugus Iron Works and Hopewell Furnace).
- Other former industrial sites that are managed by entities other than the NPS do not deal effectively with the combination of themes to be found at Homestead. Some of these sites do not strongly represent the labor themes to be found at Homestead (e.g., Bethlehem, Tredegar and Sloss). The Ford Rouge Plant and its adjacent neighborhood illustrate a combination of themes, but related to a different industry. The Rouge Plant continues to remain in active production, posing a threat to the integrity of its earliest production facilities through modernization.

Based on the review of existing historic sites and other research, this study concludes that there is an outstanding opportunity to tell the important story of labor organizations and protests within the context of the steel industry and related communities' resources. While other furnace complexes and related iron and steel industry resources are available and interpreted in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, this site offers a prime ensemble of resources to interpret the intertwined and nationally important stories of labor, the "Big Steel" era, and community. The finding of this examination is that the Bost Building NHL and certain supporting resources are suitable for inclusion in the National Park System.